

PATENT

A CASINO CARD GAME WITH PARLAY BET FEATURE5 **BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION****1. Field of the Invention**

 The present invention relates to wagering games, particularly wagering games with playing cards, wagering poker-type games with playing cards, and either video-type wagering poker-type games or casino table wagering poker-type games with multiple bet
10 placement capability.

2. Background of the Art

 Casinos design games and events to enhance the profitability of their casino games. More particularly, new and improved casino games allowing for faster-paced
15 games, an increase in the betting amount per game, an increase in the number of betting opportunities and a rise in player interest and duration of play in a game provide a direct basis for increased profits to the casinos.

 In recent years, additional betting opportunities, other than the standard single bet or wager, have been introduced in casino games. Typically, such additional betting
20 options give players further opportunities to win prizes, tend to enhance the interest of players in an underlying game, and enlarge the total amount wagered on a play of the underlying game. Casino game profitability is often enhanced as the hold percentage by the house on multiple wagers tends to be higher than the hold percentage on standard single wagers. The higher hold and the continued player interest can be maintained
25 because the return on these wagers tends to be significantly higher than the returns to players winning the single wager event. For example, typical returns on one-on-one player versus dealer casino table card games (e.g., blackjack, baccarat, Pai Gow Poker, etc.) are 1:1, or in the case of a blackjack, 3:2. Although the likelihood of a win on any hand is only slightly less than 50% in these games, amateur players tend to favor games

where extreme patience isn't required and where there is the greater excitement of larger awards and instant large winning events.

Some card games offer players the possibility of betting on the occurrence that they will receive a predetermined hand of at least a minimum (but relatively high) minimum rank during a play of the underlying game, especially in poker game variants. These types of games require that the player who wants to wager, participate in a play of an underlying game and make an independent wager on an event that may occur during play of the underlying game. One such game is referred to as THREE CARD POKER® card game. This game is described in Webb, U.S. Patent 6,237,916 and the content of this disclosure is incorporated by reference.

In other card games, the bet made by the player is a bet on a predetermined card hand received not by the player who made the bet, but by the dealer during the play of the underlying game. Consequently, for such games, a player who wants to wager on the occurrence of a combination of card values within a specified hand associated with the dealer, may make a wager without participating in a play of an underlying game.

Finally, other card games offer players the option of placing a bet on the occurrence of a predetermined hand associated with either the player making the bet or the dealer, during the play of the underlying game. There are many variations among these side bet wagers, and some wagers and games include either multiple player hands, multiple side bet capabilities, and other unique variations.

U.S. Patent No. 6,170,827 B1 (Lombardo et al.) describes a casino table card game in which a greater number of cards are provided to a dealer than to a player. The player provides a first stake and designates a portion of his lesser number of cards to correspond to that first stake. The cards dealt to a player (e.g., 4 initial cards) are split into two hands, each of which has a separate stake, and each of which plays against two hand segments established by the dealer. The player may also rearrange cards in the first segment, if the player's hand ties the dealer's hand.

U.S. Patent No. 6,474,644 (Pickle et al.) describes a casino table card game variant of three-card poker in which one or more persons act as the dealer and banker.

The game comprises the steps of: (a) affording each player an opportunity to place an ante wager to participate in said card game; (b) affording each player placing an ante wager an option of placing a jackpot wager that player's hand will match one of a predetermined schedule of hands, where a plurality of hands are ranked according to predetermined rules; (c) the dealer, from a standard fifty-two card poker deck, dealing three cards face down to the player and three cards face down to the dealer; (d) affording each player the opportunity to view only his first two cards, player's third card remaining face down; (f) affording each player the option to either fold and lose their ante wager, or continue play by placing a second wager; (g) the dealer revealing his three cards and if dealer's three-card hand does not meet or exceed a predetermined rank, player wins a predetermined amount based on the player's ante wager, player's second wager is returned without having been acted upon, and player's third card is revealed to settle jackpot wagers based on the rank of player's three-card hand according to a predetermined jackpot payout table; (h) if dealer's hand does meet or exceed a predetermined rank, player's third card is revealed and dealer compares player's three-card hand to dealer's three-card hand; (i) if dealer's hand rank is higher than player's hand, the player loses both player's ante wager and player's second wager; (j) if player's hand rank is higher than dealer's hand, player wins a first predetermined amount on the player's ante wager and player wins a second predetermined amount on player's second wager; and (k) whether dealer's hand wins or player's hand wins, dealer settles jackpot wagers based on the rank of player's three-card hand according to a predetermined jackpot payout table.

U.S. Patent No. 5,397,128 (Hesse) describes a casino card game in which cards are dealt on a playing surface, by a dealer to players, the playing surface having indicia or symbols, on which the players place their bets, with other symbols denoting collection positions for the house. The deck of cards includes numbered cards 2 through 6 and 9 along with the honor cards Ace, King, Queen and Jack. The King, Queen and Jack effectively have zero value, the Ace a value of "one" and the other numbered cards have the face numerical value. A dealer deals each of the players three cards, face up, with the objective being to hit a 9 in total count or value.

A banker is selected and the banker receives two cards face up and one card down. Wagering is effected against the bank wager of the banker, with payment of wagers processed against the bank in accordance with a pre-selected order obtained by the throw of dice prior to the onset of the game. Additional cards may be drawn at the option of the player subsequent to the opening deal, in the hopes of obtaining a better value. The player has the options of surrender, in which event he retains one-half his bet, or double by adding an increment of bet up to the original bet, and drawing an additional card. The game includes a two-tiered jackpot wherein one jackpot amount is paid when a player has three 3's of the same suit as his first three cards and a larger amount when the banker also has a hand value of nine on his first three cards. There is a partial revelation of the dealer's cards (2 of the dealer's three cards) before the player must make additional wagers. A special deck is used in the play of the game. This game therefore shows an increased amount of bonus when the player and the dealer have hands of specific count (not rank), but does not use a standard deck, does not play poker of any variation, and requires dealer hand partial disclosure.

U.S. Patent No. 6,237,916 (Webb, assigned to Shuffle Master, Inc.) discloses the basic play of THREE CARD POKER® card game. The game is a method of playing a three-card poker card game, comprising the steps of: receiving a first wager that a player's three-card hand will exceed a dealer's three-card hand; receiving an optional second wager that said player's three-card hand will be at least a first predetermined rank (PAIRS PLUS BET); dealing only three cards each to said player and to said dealer; receiving an optional third wager (Play bet) from said player, wherein if said third wager is not received, said player forfeits said first wager and any said second wager; determining whether said dealer's three-card hand is at least a second predetermined rank, if said dealer's three-card hand is not at least said second predetermined rank, paying said player an amount based on said first wager and returning said third wager to said player, if said dealer's three-card hand is at least said second predetermined rank, comparing said dealer's three-card hand with said player's three-card hand; if said player's three-card hand is higher, paying said player an amount based on both said first and third wagers,

and if said player's three-card hand is lower, said player forfeiting both said first and third wagers; and paying said player an amount in accordance with a predetermined scale when said second and third wagers are received and said player's three-card hand is at least said first predetermined rank.

5 U.S. Patent No. 6,533,279 (Moody) describes a variant of Three-Card poker. An initial hand of three cards is dealt to the player and three community cards are dealt face down. The player decides which cards to hold and which cards to discard. For each card that is discarded, the player uses one of the community cards as the replacement card. If the player discards one card, Card #1 is used as the replacement card. If the player
10 discards two cards, Card #1 and Card #2 are used as the replacement cards. If the player discards all three cards, Card #1, Card #2 and Card #3 are used as the replacement cards. After the player has made his decision, all of the community cards are turned face up and the outcome of the player's final three-card hand is determined. Winning and losing outcomes are determined based on a pay table and the amount of the player's wager.

15 Published U.S. Application No. 2003/0107176 describes a method of playing a card game that includes providing a deck of playing cards, assigning a position value to positions at a playing area, dealing a predetermined number of cards to at least one player at least one pre-selected position, and determining if a player is entitled to a payment and/or value based upon at least one dealt card in either the player's hand or a house hand
20 matching at least one assigned position value. Alternatively, bonus values are determined based upon cards dealt to the dealer as opposed to being based upon playing positions. This reference shows bonuses based on dealer cards, but not based on ranked player and dealer hands.

25 U.S. Patent Nos. 4,836,553 (Suttle et al.) and 4,861,041 (Jones) describe the basic play of Caribbean Stud® poker. A five-card hand is dealt to each player and to the dealer after an ante wager is made by each player. One card from the dealer's hand is exposed, and the player may place a wager that is a multiple of the Ante to stay in the game after viewing the dealer's partially disclosed hand (e.g., the up card). Bonus bets are paid in

this game, only when the player attains a ranked hand and beats the dealer's hand. The dealer's hand has no effect on bonus events.

5 U.S. Patent No. 5,685,774 (Webb) describes a casino table poker game in which separate bets may be placed by a player that a player's hand will either exceed a predetermined rank or beat the dealer's hand. At least one, but not necessarily both bets may be placed. A third optional bet is available that backs up the wager as to whether the player's hand will exceed the rank of the dealer's hand. Wild cards are available, and an initial hand of four cards may be dealt to the player. The dealer's hand has no effect on bonus events.

10 U.S. Patent No. 6,012,719 (Webb) describes a three-part game, which combines the play of Blackjack, three-card poker, and a side bet. A dealer's card is combined into the player's first two cards for the three-card poker play. The dealer's hand has no effect on bonus events. Play continues with a game of blackjack.

15 U.S. Patent No. 5,851,011 (Lott) describes a poker-type game with multiple wagers, jackpots and insurance options. Multiple players wager on a single five-card player hand which competes against a seven-card dealer hand from which five dealer cards are selected to form a dealer's hand. The dealer's hand has no effect on bonus events.

20 In spite of the number of these games that have been disclosed in the art, only a few games have become truly successful in the casino table environment. It is desirable to provide new games to the industry that have those unique features of play and awards that lead to a commercially successful game.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

25 A poker-type underlying game with a secondary bonus game is described. According to the invention, each player makes a wager to participate in play of the poker-type underlying game. Players optionally place a PARLAY BONUS side bet wager on the bonus game. A hand of cards is dealt to a bonus hand position. A hand of cards is dealt to each participating player, and a hand is dealt to the dealer.

When the player hand has at least a predetermined poker hand rank, the player attains at least a first bonus amount level on the player's placed optional side bet bonus wager. When the player making a PARLAY BONUS side bet wager has the at least predetermined poker hand rank and the bonus hand or dealer hand or both has at least a
5 second predetermined hand rank, this occurrence enhances the first bonus amount level attained by the player, without any additional side bet wager or play wager being placed.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE FIGURE

Figure 1 shows a casino play table surface that can be used in at least one variant
10 of a game according to the present invention.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE INVENTION

A poker-type underlying game is played. This is preferably a multiple-card poker game (versus a One-Card poker game), and comprises 2-Card poker, 3-Card poker, 4-
15 Card poker, 5-Card poker, 6-Card poker or 7-Card poker, along with their variants, and preferably these games are stud poker, or wild card poker, and not draw poker games to conserve time, cards and space. The poker games or their variants are played with a bonus game or bonus event of the present invention is played with some, many or all of at least the player's cards. The play of the game according to the invention begins with a
20 player making at least an Ante wager to play in the underlying poker-type game. To play in the bonus event, the player must place an optional side bet bonus wager on the bonus game. In a first example of the invention, after the wager(s) have been placed, at least a first number of cards are dealt to a bonus hand position. This bonus hand position receives cards specific to play in the bonus event only and are not used in the play of the
25 underlying game. At least a second number of cards is dealt to each player that has made at least the Ante Wager, and at least a third number of cards is dealt to the dealer. These numbers of cards may be equal or different among the bonus hand, the dealer hand and the player hands, depending upon the rules of the underlying game being played. In one

example of the invention, each player hand, the dealer hand and the bonus hand consist of three cards.

When the player hand has at least a predetermined poker hand rank that enables consideration of the parlay hand bonus side bet wager game, the player attains at least a
5 first bonus amount level on the player's placed optional parlay side bet bonus wager. The bonus amount in a preferred form of the invention increases with increasing hand rank. When the player has the at least predetermined poker hand rank and the dealer has at least a second predetermined hand rank, this combination of events enhances the parlay bonus amount level attained by the player, without any additional wager being placed beyond
10 the optional side bet parlay wager. In a preferred form of the invention, the enhanced payouts are increasingly greater with increasing bonus hand rankings.

The rules of the basic game of THREE CARD POKER® card game are well known and will not be repeated here. The description of the bonus side bet of the present invention in combination with this game is described below:

- 15 1) The player may place up to four separate wagers, the three normal THREE CARD POKER® game wagers and the parlay bonus side bet of the present invention.
- 2) In a preferred variant of the game, to place the parlay bonus side bet wager of the present game, the player must place at least the Ante wager and the PAIR
20 PLUS wager associated with the THREE CARD POKER® card game, although this bonus event may be placed in some game variations independent of the placement of the PAIR PLUS side bet or the ANTE bet.
- 3) The first hand out of the dealer shoe (or any other hand, either after players' hands and before dealer's hand, or after players' hands and after dealer's
25 hand, or even at a specified time or position between players' hand as is done in Pai Gow poker) goes to a bonus position, generally referred to herein as the PARLAY BONUS hand. The cards are dealt face down.

- 4) The players' hands and dealer's hands are then dealt in the normal manner for the THREE CARD POKER® card game, and the Play wager or fold options are exercised by the player.
- 5) A first effect of the bonus side bet wager is a potential bonus based solely on the rank of a player's hand, on which a player has placed the bonus side bet. If the rank of a player's hand exceeds a minimum rank (e.g., a flush), a first bonus is awarded. This bonus does not depend on the quality of the dealer's hand.
- 6) The player will then anticipate a potentially higher bonus payout that is dependent upon the rank of the PARLAY BONUS hand. This anticipation will extend through the play of all of the players' hands.
- 7) The PARLAY BONUS hand and in some forms of the invention, a dealer's hand where there is no separate PARLAY BONUS hand, is ultimately revealed, and if the PARLAY BONUS hand also exceeds a minimum rank, an increased bonus is to be awarded. The player has awaited revelation of the PARLAY BONUS hand with knowledge that the player will receive at least one level of bonus and is anticipating a potential level of bonus that significantly exceeds any bonus available in normal play of the THREE CARD POKER® card game. There may be alternative bonus events based on the dealer's hand also exceeding a predetermined minimum rank, or even a bonus based solely on the dealer's hand exceeding a predetermined minimum rank (with or without a PARLAY BONUS hand being dealt). Play without the PARLAY BONUS hand has the advantage that, even though the player may lose the underlying wager (and any additional play wager) because of the dealer's high-ranking hand, the PARLAY BONUS wager will be increased to the player for the same reason.

As can be seen from a comparison of the features and steps of the present invention with the above-described prior art, there are significant points of novelty between the underlying game of this invention and particularly the THREE CARD

POKER® card game with side bet bonus of this invention and the games described by the prior art. Among these differences are:

- 1) A table hand with which players do not compete that may increase a player's bonus for a ranked hand when a side bet is placed, or a dealer's hand with which the player's hand does not compete in the PARLAY BONUS side bet wager game.
- 2) A side bet bonus game in which a player may be initially guaranteed a bonus and then must await and anticipate a determination of a larger bonus without placing any further money at risk.
- 3) The deal (as a first hand or otherwise) of a BONUS HAND that is used alone or in conjunction with a player's hand to provide an increased bonus over that available from a player's hand.
- 4) The requirement of a player making an ante bet and a first PAIRS PLUS bonus wager before allowing a player to make a second PARLAY BONUS side bet wager that is distinct from the first bonus wager and offers a higher bonus payout.

Reference to the Figure and examples of the play of hands will be instructive in the practice of the invention.

Figure 1 shows a casino game table 2 for play of at least one variant of the present game. The table surface 4 is shown with an automatic shuffling device 6, such as a Shuffle Master ACE® shuffler (described in Grauzer et al., U.S. Patent 6,149,154), Shuffle Master KING® shuffler (described in Grauzer et al., U.S. Patent 6,254,096), or as described in co-pending U.S. Patent Application Serial No. 10/261,166 filed September 27, 2002 entitled: Card Shuffling Apparatus With Automatic Card Size Calibration. In the variant of a THREE CARD POKER® card game PARLAY BONUS game being discussed here, players place at least an ANTE wager on a marked wager position 12. Marked wager position 10 is for a THREE CARD POKER® card game PLAY Wager, and wager position 8 is for a PAIR PLUS bonus wager. Wager position 14 is for

placement of the PARLAY BONUS wager according to a variant of the game described herein.

Cards (not shown) are dealt from the shuffler 6 after wagers have been placed by the players. Only four player positions 24, 26, 28 and 30 are shown, merely as a
5 convenience to allow greater detail in the Figure. Conventional casino tables allow up to about seven players, and an individual player may be seated at a table to play the present game. Cards are dealt in any desired order to each of the player positions 24 26 28 and 30, the PARLAY BONUS hand position 18 and the Dealer's Hand position 20. The game may also be played with electronic displays and virtual cards in similar positions,
10 with player entry pads (not shown) at the player positions 24 26 28 and 30, meters (not shown) displaying wagers and awards, and the player positions 24 26 28 and 30 providing virtual displays of cards. A video gaming apparatus (not shown) counterpart may also be used with single player hands, single dealer hand, and single PARLAY BONUS hand.

15 It will be assumed for purposes of this Example that the Players have all placed ANTE Wagers 12, will make a PLAY Wager 10 in the progression of the play of the game, PAIR PLUS wagers 8, and the PARLAY BONUS wager 14 in each hand in equal amounts of \$10.00 for each wager. A first set of three cards is dealt to the first player position 24, and then an additional three card hands are consecutively dealt to each of the
20 other player positions 26, 28 and 30. A three-card PARLAY BONUS hand is then dealt to the PARLAY BONUS position 18 either before or during or after the other cards are dealt, and the dealer's three-card hand is dealt to the dealer's hand position 20. Each of the players reviews his hand and makes the PLAY Wager.

25 The PARLAY BONUS Pay table for the exemplary game is provided below, based on a flush being both the minimum player rank hand and the minimum PARLAY BONUS rank hand to win the wager. The following payout odds are guaranteed to the player prior to revelation of the parlay hand.

<u>PLAYER HAND</u>	<u>SINGLE BONUS</u>
STRAIGHT FLUSH	20:1
THREE-OF-A-KIND	15:1
STRAIGHT	3:1
FLUSH	2:1

The bonus system is based on the player attaining one of a predetermined number of winning hands, which is a relatively high ranking bonus hand (by way of a non-limiting example, at least a flush or better), and the PARLAY BONUS hand exceeding an at least minimum rank (e.g., Pair of sixes, Pair of 10's, Pair of Aces, Flush or Straight. The PARLAY BONUS predetermined rankings may be the same or different then the Single Hand bonus rank. For example, the pay tables could be based on at least a Pair for the Player and at least a Pair for the dealer, any hand for the PARLAY HAND, at least a particular rank pair for either or both the player and dealer, or any other combination of particular minimum ranks for the Players and dealers. The minimum rankings may not be equal. Other such combinations and payouts are offered for exemplification and consideration below.

<u>Player</u>	<u>Parlay Hand</u>			<u>Parlay Bonus Hand</u>		
	<u>Any Hand</u>	<u>Pair</u>	<u>Flush</u>	<u>Straight</u>	<u>3-of-a-Kind</u>	<u>Straight Flush</u>
Straight Flush	20:1	50:1	300:1	400:1	3000:1	5000:1
3-of-a-Kind	15:1	40:1	200:1	300:1	2000:1	3000:1
Straight	3:1	10:1	25:1	30:1	300:1	400:1
Flush	2:1	9:1	20:1	25:1	200:1	300:1

As can be seen, the selection of different predetermined player minimum hands and different PARLAY BONUS hands can enable the house to adjust the odds to make more attractive variations or adjust the house hold on each game.

Although specific examples and equipment has been described in certain aspects of the invention, alternatives, extensions and equivalents are obvious to those of ordinary skill in the art and are intended to be included within the concepts and claims of this invention. As non-limiting examples, wild cards may be added to the deck, deuces may
5 be wild, decks may be stacked with individual cards (e.g., four additional Aces provided), additional (e.g., four) cards may be dealt to players or dealers from which a hand of lesser cards (e.g., three cards) may be made, multiple decks could be used, progressive jackpots for single player hands or combinations of player and PARLAY BONUS hands (e.g., a jackpot for at least two straight flushes with a PARLAY BONUS wager, or a straight
10 flush and three-of-a-kind). Play wagers may be the same as or multiples of the ANTE wager, and other variations that can be expected for use with casino table games. The PARLAY BONUS amounts can be displayed on an electronic display, adding anticipation and excitement to the game. The parlay bet can be a fixed amount, can be a multiple of one or more wagers in the base game or can be any amount up to the house
15 limit.

Similarly, the base game can be another poker-type game such as LET IT RIDE® stud poker as described in U.S. Patent 5,288,081 or a variant thereof with a wild card(s), where each player has a three card hand. The dealer could use his two community cards plus the card burned at the beginning of play, the community cards plus one dealt card, or
20 a separate three card PARLAY HAND.

The side bet game could also be adapted to use with non-poker games such as Blackjack. The dealer could deal a three card PARLAY HAND, and the side bet could be on the combined rankings of the PARLAY HAND and the player's first two cards and the dealer's up card.

25 Similarly, the PARLAY HAND need not be a separate hand. If the base game is a game where the player competes against the dealer, all or part of the dealer hand can also serve as a PARLAY HAND.

The PARLAY HAND could also be randomly selected and displayed on an electronic display device. This PARLAY HAND could then be the same hand used on a series of tables connected via a networking system.

5 All of the apparatus, devices and methods disclosed and claimed herein can be made and executed without undue experimentation in light of the present disclosure. While the apparatus, devices and methods of this invention have been described in terms of both generic descriptions and preferred embodiments, it will be apparent to those skilled in the art that variations may be applied to the apparatus, devices and methods described herein without departing from the concept and scope of the invention. More
10 specifically, it will be apparent that certain elements, components, steps, and sequences that are functionally related to the preferred embodiments may be substituted for the elements, components, steps, and sequences described and/or claimed herein while the same or similar results would be achieved. All such similar substitutions and
15 modifications apparent to those skilled in the art are deemed to be within the scope and concept of the invention as defined by the appended claims.